MARC SILVESTRI - ARIF PRIANTO

# BATMAN™ & THE JOKER™

## THE DEADLY DUO

BOOK FIVE

DC BLACK LABEL

17+ MATURE

Home is a heartbeat away.

# LOST: SUPERMAN

DC

March

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A new blockbuster 10-issue series from the creators of the Eisner Award-nominated *Deathstroke*

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STORY AND ART

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COLORS

# ARIF PRIANTO

LETTERS

# TROY PETERI

SPECIAL THANKS TO

# MATT HAWKINS

SPECIAL THANKS TO

# BRIDGET SILVESTRI

DO I LOOK LIKE A **COWARD** TO YOU, **BULLOCK?**

POLICE

ACTUALLY, **BENNET,** WITH THAT MUSTACHE I'M THINKIN' '70s PORN STAR.

ALWAYS THE COMEDIAN. LOOK, I DON'T CARE WHAT YOUR BOYFRIEND **BATMAN** SAYS, I **DON'T** NEED **BODYGUARDS.** AND I **WON'T** BE A PRISONER IN MY OWN HOUSE!

FUNNY, THAT'S PRETTY MUCH WHAT **BLIX** SAID--'CEPT FOR THE BOYFRIEND PART.

YOU HAVEN'T HAPPENED TO SEE HIS HEAD LYING AROUND ANYWHERE, HAVE YOU?

GPD

**NOBODY'S** GOING TO MESS WITH ME.

IMPRESSIVE. REMIND ME TO SHOW YOU MY **POKÉMON** COLLECTION ON OUR NEXT SLEEPOVER.

WE'RE DONE HERE, BULLOCK. THE DOOR'S BEHIND YOU.

SURE.

LISTEN, BENNET, JUST 'CAUSE I DON'T **LIKE** YOU DOESN'T MEAN I WANNA ZIP YOU UP IN A **BODY BAG,** OKAY?

VERY DRAMATIC. STICK TO THE JOKES, YOU'RE A BETTER **CLOWN** THAN A DETECTIVE.

YOU WERE A MAIN PLAYER AT THE **SIMMS WEDDING.** DO WHATEVER YOU WANT, BUT MAYBE THINK ABOUT LOCKING YOUR DOOR.

HEY, HOW 'BOUT ANOTHER BEER OVER HERE?

YO! IF ONE OF YOU OVERPAID **BABYSITTERS** WANNA TAKE A BREAK FROM EATING MY FOOD TO BRING ME A **BEER,** THAT'D BE GREAT.

CHRIST.

LAZY-ASSES.

GODDAMMIT!

ALL RIGHT... WHOEVER YOU ARE, LET'S GO...

...I'M NOT AFRAID OF--

HHSSSSSSSS...

MY GOD.

GHAAAAAA--

THE CHARRED RUIN OF ***ST. GABRIEL'S CATHEDRAL*** SITS ON LAND OWNED BY ***DONALD SIMMS,*** HIS GRIM REMINDER TO THE CITIZENS OF GOTHAM, THE POLICE--AND ***BATMAN***--THAT HIS DAUGHTER ***DIED*** HERE...

...AND WE ARE ***ALL*** TO BLAME.

THE AFTERMATH OF THAT DAY DESTROYED LIVES AND ENDED CAREERS. ***JIM GORDON*** TOOK THE BLAME ON ***HIMSELF*** AND INTENDED TO ***RESIGN.*** I CONVINCED HIM NOT TO.

THERE IS NO ***SOLID EVIDENCE*** TO SUGGEST THAT SIMMS IS BEHIND THE RECENT EVENTS WITH THE JOKER, BUT ALL ROADS LEAD BACK TO HERE... BACK TO ***THEN.***

THE JOKER BOTCHED AN ARMORED CAR HEIST. THE ENSUING POLICE CHASE ENDED ***HERE*** AT THE CATHEDRAL. THE JOKER AND HIS GANG TOOK HOSTAGES AND BEGAN ***KILLING*** THEM. I TRIED TO STOP HIM.

GOTHAM WAS SCARRED THAT DAY, AND IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOWED, THE ***WAYNE/SIMMS FOUNDATION*** WAS FORMED TO HELP IT HEAL.

THE FOUNDATION TAKES CARE OF THOSE CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE OF THE ***POLICE*** AND ***BATMAN'S WAR*** ON CRIME...A THUMB IN THE BROKEN DAM OF GOTHAM.

THAT'S WHEN EVERYTHING WENT WRONG.

THE JOKER ATTACHED GRENADES AND C-4 TO THE CATHEDRAL'S MAIN SUPPORT PILLARS.

OOOF!

BLAMM

BENNET'S MEN STORMED IN, SETTING OFF TRIPWIRES RIGGED TO THE BOOBY TRAPS.

KRESHHH

PLINK

PLINK

PLINK

FSSSS--

IN THE CHAOS, THE HOSTAGES BEGAN RUNNING FOR THE EXITS. MOST WEREN'T GOING TO MAKE IT...

I HAD TO SAVE AS MANY AS I COULD. THE ARMORED CAR WAS MY BEST OPTION.

MY MISTAKE WAS NOT REALIZING DONALD SIMMS WAS STILL ALIVE.

DADDY!

--SSSSST

ST. GABRIEL'S WAS CONSIDERED A MARVEL OF ENGINEERING WHEN IT WAS BUILT NEARLY TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

BOOM

BOOM

BECAUSE THE STRUCTURE WAS SO TALL, IT WAS SAID THAT ONLY GOD'S WILL KEPT IT FROM COLLAPSING.

WHEN THE CITY WANTED TO BUILD A SUBWAY TUNNEL UNDER ITS FOUNDATION, THE IDEA WAS MET WITH HEAVY PUBLIC PROTEST.

IGNORING SAFETY CONCERNS, THE CITY BUILT IT ANYWAY...AND IT'S THE ONLY REASON I'M ALIVE TODAY.

I HAD LOST HOLD OF ***AMANDA SIMMS*** IN THE FALL. WHEN THE SMOKE IN THE TUNNEL CLEARED...

...I SAW HER.

TO THIS DAY, I AM UNSURE IF THE SOUND I HEARD WAS THE WAIL OF APPROACHING SIRENS, OR DONALD SIMMS'S TORTURED ***SCREAMING.***

CHKT

IT DIDN'T SEE ME. OR IF IT DID, IT DIDN'T CARE. THE ***BAG*** IT'S CARRYING IS SOAKED WITH BLOOD.

THE *FIRST* ENCOUNTER I HAD WITH ONE OF THESE *CREATURES* WAS LESS THAN FOUR BLOCKS FROM HERE, ON *CANAL STREET.*

AT THE TIME I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY IT CHOSE THE ESCAPE PATH IT DID, WHY IT RAN INTO A *DEAD END.* NOW I DO. IT WAS THE MOST *DIRECT* ROUTE *HERE.*

THESE TUNNELS SNAKE FOR MILES UNDER THE NEIGHBORHOODS AND WATERWAYS OF *GOTHAM,* DERELICT FOR DECADES.

IT'S ASSUMED *THE JOKER* AND *HARLEY QUINN* USED THEM TO EVADE CAPTURE THAT DAY.

I LET IT GO FOR NOW. A *MARKER* WILL MAKE IT EASY TO TRACK LATER WHEN I'M READY.

THOOF

FIRST RULE OF *DETECTIVE* WORK...

SPAK

...FOLLOW THE *MONEY.*

# BATMAN & THE JOKER
# THE DEADLY DUO

# CHAPTER FIVE

# THE WEDDING

HELLLOOOOOO?

ANYBODY THERE?

HEY, FYI, I DRANK A *LOT* OF ICED TEA AGAIN TODAY!

I'M NOT JOKING, GUYS. I *REALLY* GOTTA USE THE *BAT-ROOM!* HEEHEE.

FINALLY...

...I'M ABOUT READY TO BUR--

--ST?

OOOOH...

...PLOT TWIST!

WHERE'S GORDON?

WHO WANTS TO KNO--

WHACK

PTOO! HITTING A MAN IN SHACKLES? YOU AFRAID OF A FAIR FIGHT, TOUGH GUY?

CLIKT

OH... I LIKE YOU!

HAHAHAHAHAHAAAAA!

WHUK

THWAK

OOF!

HA! TOO SLOW, GIRLY BAT.

GOTCHA!

NIGHTY-NIGHT.

DON'T LET THE BEDBUGS B--

KLUDD

=GRK=

YOU'RE **DEAD,** YOU SON OF A **BITCH.**

*KKKK*

**ENOUGH.**

THAT'S ENOUGH.

GHAKK! KAFF!

LET. GO.

HOW *COULD* YOU, *BRUCE?*

*THE JOKER* HAS MY *FATHER,* AND YOU'RE *HELPING* HIM? HE'S *TORTURING* HIM, FOR GOD'S SAKE!

IT'S MORE COMPLICATED THAN THAT, *BARBARA.*

THIS ISN'T *JUST* ABOUT THE JOKER. HE'S ONLY *ONE* PIECE IN A MUCH LARGER PUZZLE, A PUZZLE THAT COULD PROVE TO BE A DANGER TO *ALL* OF *GOTHAM.*

WHOEVER IS BEHIND THIS, SIMPLE *REVENGE* ISN'T THE *ENDGAME.* THE TASKS WITH THE JOKER, THE SCIENCE WE'VE SEEN--ALL OF IT HAS A *LARGER PURPOSE.*

YOUR *FATHER* IS PART OF THAT LARGER PURPOSE, BUT WHOEVER HAS HIM HAS BURIED HIM SO DEEP THAT EVEN WITH *MY* RESOURCES, I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO LOCATE HIM.

*BULL.* YOU CAN FIND *ANYONE.*

MY FATHER DOESN'T HAVE YOUR SKILLS *OR* YOUR RESOURCES, BUT IF IT WAS *BATMAN* THAT HAD GONE MISSING, I GUARANTEE YOU IT WOULDN'T BE "COMPLICATED." HE'D *FIND* YOU, NO MATTER WHAT.

AND WHAT IF THE JOKER *KILLS* HIM, BRUCE?

ARE YOU GOING TO HAVE THE WAYNE/SIMMS FOUNDATION JUST CUT ME A *CHECK?*

BARBARA, YOUR FATHER WAS TAKEN FOR MORE THAN JUST *LEVERAGE.* HE'S BEING USED AS *BAIT.* I PROMISE YOU I'LL FIND HIM AND BRING HIM BACK...

...BUT I NEED *THE JOKER'S* HELP.

SO, DONALD SIMMS PULLED HIS RESEARCH FROM MEDICINAL CARE AND TRANSFERRED IT ALL TO ***MILITARY*** APPLICATIONS?

AND SIMMS MADE THE CONSCIOUS DECISION TO TURN HIS BACK ON THE SICK TO CREATE EVEN ***MORE*** HUMAN SUFFERING...ALL FOR HIS BOTTOM LINE. JESUS.

YES, AND IN A TWISTED WAY, HE SUCCEEDED. BUT WHAT I'M COUNTING ON ARE HIS ***FAILURES.*** THE INSTABILITY OF HIS ***PREDATOR CELL*** WAS NEVER FULLY ADDRESSED.

THE ORGANISM "SELF-CANNIBALIZING DUE TO ***CATASTROPHIC RETROGRESSION"*** REMAINED A RISK THROUGHOUT THE CLINICAL TRIALS.

SIMMS'S FAILURES MAY BE OUR ***ONLY*** CHANCE AGAINST THE ***CREATURES*** TERRORIZING GOTHAM.

...I WOULD BE MUCH MORE CONFIDENT IN THE PLAN IF WE TOOK THE TIME TO DO SOME ***ADDITIONAL*** TESTING.

SPEAKING OF WHICH, SIR...

IT APPEARS SO. IT WAS NO LONGER ***COST-EFFECTIVE*** FOR SIMMS TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS HE KEPT COMING UP AGAINST WHEN APPLYING HIS ***SYNTHETIC CELL TECHNOLOGY*** TO FIGHT ***CANCER.***

AT SOME POINT HE CONCLUDED THAT THE ***MILITARY*** WOULD BE LESS CONCERNED ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS IF IT MEANT THEY WOULD GET A NEARLY ***INDESTRUCTIBLE SOLDIER.*** WE'VE ***SEEN*** SOME OF THE RESULTS.

BUT THERE WAS A SIDE EFFECT THAT WAS ***ESPECIALLY*** DISTURBING: WHEN THE NEW DNA WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE ***HOST BODY,*** IT BROUGHT CERTAIN ***MEMORIES AND TRAITS*** ALONG WITH IT--SOMETHING LONG CONSIDERED IMPOSSIBLE.

BECAUSE OF THIS, MANY OF THE TEST SUBJECTS SUFFERED ***ACUTE SCHIZOPHRENIA*** AND SEVERE ***MULTIPLE PERSONALITY DISORDERS.*** THE TREATMENTS LITERALLY CAUSED THEM TO GO ***INSANE.***

***TIME*** ISN'T A LUXURY WE HAVE, ALFRED.

NO, MASTER BRUCE...

"...I DON'T SUPPOSE IT IS."

I...I'M SORRY, JIM...

...I DON'T THINK I CAN DO THIS ANYMORE. THEY'RE **NEVER** GOING TO LET US GO...AND FOR ALL I KNOW, MY FAMILY IS ALREADY **DEAD.**

I'VE BEEN A DOCTOR MOST OF MY LIFE, BOTH AS A SOLDIER IN AFGHANISTAN AND HERE AT HOME...

...I **KNOW** THAT I'VE MADE A DIFFERENCE... I **KNOW** I'VE SAVED LIVES...

...BUT IN THE END, I COULDN'T SAVE MY OWN WIFE AND DAUGHTER...

**CARL,** LISTEN TO ME...WE **DON'T KNOW** THAT. WE **CAN'T** GIVE UP **HOPE.**

GOD DAMN IT, YOU'RE ONE OF THE STRONGEST MEN I KNOW...AND WHAT YOU DID FOR ME...

NO, IT'S OKAY... I COULDN'T **HURT** YOU AGAIN.

YOU KNOW, IT'S FUNNY, I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE MORE PAINFUL... CUTTING OUT MY EYE...

...BUT THE TRUTH IS, **NOTHING** COULD BE WORSE THAN THE PAIN OF LOSING MY FAMILY.

CARL--

CREAKKK

MY GOD.

HOLEY MOLEY, CAN I FLY IN THIS?

I MEAN, LOOK AT ME! AT THE VERY LEAST I SHOULD BE ABLE TO LEAP TALL BUILDINGS IN A SINGLE BOUND, RIGHT?

IF MY ANALYSIS IS CORRECT, WE'RE HEADED INTO UNCHARTED TERRITORY AGAINST FORMIDABLE ODDS...

CLIKT

CHAK

...SO LIKE THE JOKER SAID ON THE TRAIN...

...I NEED TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX.

THERE'S A BACKPACK OVER THERE. PUT IT ON.

WHAT'S IN IT, SNACKS? BECAUSE ALL GREAT SUPER-HERO ADVENTURES NEED SNACKS!

WE DESCEND INTO THE TUNNEL, PAST WHERE AMANDA SIMMS DIED.

ALL THAT LIES AHEAD OF US IS DARKNESS.

THE BATCAVE COMPUTER TRACKED THE ***MARKER*** AND MAPPED OUT A PATH THROUGH THE MAZE OF DARK TUNNELS. THAT PATH HAS TAKEN US ***UNDER*** GOTHAM'S ***EAST RIVER.***

IN THE 1970s ENGINEERS TUNNELED THROUGH THE BEDROCK BENEATH THE WATERWAY AS PART OF A MASSIVE EXPANSION TO THE CITY'S ***SUBWAY SYSTEM.***

DESIGN FLAWS LED TO SEVERAL ***FATAL*** ACCIDENTS, AND AFTER MILLIONS OF DOLLARS AND YEARS OF CONSTRUCTION, THE PROJECT WAS PERMANENTLY SHUT DOWN.

IN THE DECADES THAT FOLLOWED, ANY TUNNELS THAT HADN'T BEEN SEALED OFF WERE BLOCKED BY FALLEN DEBRIS.

THIS PASSAGEWAY HAS BEEN RECENTLY CLEARED. WE'RE GETTING CLOSE.

HEY LOOK! ***GRABGRASS!*** HEEHEE *SNORT!*

WE'RE ENTERING ***POSEIDON STATION,*** WHERE ALL THE RAILWAYS USED TO INTERSECT. IT WAS DESIGNED SO PASSENGERS COULD RELAX WHILE WAITING TO CONNECT TO OTHER TRAINS.

THE STATION WAS TO BE THE CROWN JEWEL IN A ***SUBTERRANEAN MALL*** HOUSING WATER-THEMED SHOPS AND RESTAURANTS. THE CONCEPT WAS TO GIVE COMMUTERS A FEELING OF SPACE TO REDUCE ANY ANXIETY ABOUT THE 150 FEET OF ROCK AND WATER DIRECTLY ABOVE THEIR HEADS.

NOW IT IS HOME TO SOMETHING ***ELSE*** ENTIRELY.

WHOA...

...THAT'S A LOTTA ME'S!

NO ATTEMPT IS MADE TO STOP US, AND WHAT I FOUND IN THE SIMTEK FILES COMES INTO SHARPER FOCUS. HIDDEN IN THE DOCUMENTS WAS A SECRET ***PATIENTS*** LIST. THE TEST SUBJECTS FOR THE ***SYNTHETIC CELL PROGRAM*** HAD BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH VARIOUS CANCERS, ALL OF THEM TERMINAL. IN A MATTER OF WEEKS THEY WERE ALL ***CURED.***

DONALD SIMMS'S ***PREDATOR CELLS*** EXCEEDED ***ALL*** EXPECTATIONS AND DESTROYED ANY CANCER THEY ENCOUNTERED. BUT WITHIN MONTHS, THE SUBJECTS' BODIES TURNED AGAINST THEM.

SIMMS EMPLOYED AGGRESSIVE TREATMENTS TO COUNTERACT THE CELL MUTATIONS, BUT ENCOUNTERED A PROBLEM HE COULDN'T SOLVE.

EARLY ON, HE FOUND THAT ***BLOOD*** WAS THE KEY. SPECIFICALLY, A ***RARE BLOOD TYPE*** WITH AN UNUSUALLY LOW ***ANTIGEN*** COMPONENT. SIMMS HIMSELF HAS THIS BLOOD TYPE AND USED SAMPLES OF ***HIS OWN TISSUE*** AS THE ***GENETIC FOUNDATION*** FOR THE SYNTHETIC CELL.

HEY, HOWYA DOIN'? ***LOVE*** WHAT YOU'VE DONE WITH THE PLACE. THAT ***PEOPLE GARDEN*** YA GOT BACK THERE--NICE TOUCH.

THE GRIM REALITY WAS THAT FOR THE TREATMENTS TO WORK, A ***GENETIC MATCH*** WITH SIMMS WAS NEEDED. ULTIMATELY THIS WAS UNACHIEVABLE, AND ALL OF THE TEST SUBJECTS ***DIED...EXCEPT*** THE ***ONE*** THAT HAD THE NECESSARY ***GENETIC CHARACTERISTICS...***

...HIS DAUGHTER, ***AMANDA SIMMS.***

THE WEDDING PARTY IS MADE UP OF WHAT I ASSUME ARE THE GUESTS KILLED AT ST. GABRIEL'S CATHEDRAL. THE S.W.A.T. TEAM FROM THAT DAY, AS WELL AS JOKER'S GANG, ACT AS ***GROOMSMEN.***

THEY'RE ALL HERE, HEADS MOUNTED ON PIKES--BOBBY TWO-TEETH, HARRY MILLS, SLAM WILSON, RONNIE "THE CHOPPER" GIBBS...

...OFFICERS LANG, WHEATLY, DASH, BLIX...

...AND ***BENNET.***

THIS GROTESQUE ***STAGE PLAY*** HAS BEEN PLANNED FOR A LONG TIME. THE SETS WERE BUILT, THE BODIES DUG UP AND ARRANGED.

WHATEVER HAPPENS, WE WERE MEANT TO BE HERE FROM THE VERY ***BEGINNING.***

ONLY A FEW PLAYERS REMAIN.

***PUDDIN'!***

I KNEW YOU'D COME! I KNEW IT! I KNEW IT! I KNEW IT!

OH, I MISSED YOU SO MUCH! MUAHMUAHMUAH!

YEAH... MAYBE MISSED A FEW BATHS TOO.

BATMAN...

DONALD SIMMS.

WE... NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE.

I HAD HOPED I WAS WRONG.

FATHER, DON'T BE RUDE...

...YOU CAN'T TELL THE **GUESTS OF HONOR** TO **LEAVE** THEIR **OWN** PARTY.

I'D PORED OVER THE DATA, SEEN WHAT SIMMS'S RESEARCH WAS CAPABLE OF, SAW THE **GRAVE SITE**...

...BUT I HAD HOPED THAT WHAT NOW STANDS BEFORE ME WAS SIMPLY **NOT** POSSIBLE.

HELLO, JOKER. HELLO, BATMAN. WE'VE **ONE** LAST GUEST TO WELCOME AND THEN WE CAN BEGIN...

...AH, *HERE* HE IS.

JIM--

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, OLD FRIEND...

...READY TO KICK SOME ASS?

TO BE CONTINUED...

INKED PAGES BY

# MARC SILVESTRI

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KNEEL BEFORE THE GODS OF THE DC UNIVERSE!

# DC UNIVERSE LAZARUS PLANET

## REVENGE OF THE GODS

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DC

4 ISSUES

TWICE MONTHLY
STARTING IN
MARCH

COVER
MARC SILVESTRI & ARIF PRIANTO

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1:25 VARIANT COVER
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1:50 VARIANT COVER
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1:100 VARIANT COVER
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"THAT'S WHEN EVERYTHING WENT WRONG."

—BATMAN

The Last Kryptonian-DCP